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ABSTRACT

A program to teach learning and reading skills to career-oriented junior and community college students is described. "Learning Strategy" classes are given twice a week, at New York City Community College, and are supplemented with tutorial sessions. The objective of the program is to work from the student's area of highest motivation (his vocation) toward broadening his learning skills. Materials are provided in a learning center for use by the students and their tutors. The personnel of the program (members of various departments, counselors, reading teachers, tutors and students) meet in seminars, demonstration lessons, and conferences with the program coordinators. Because the learning/reading classes are based upon the particular area the student is working in, it is hoped the program will be more responsive to student needs. Diagrams of organizational features are included. (AL)

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ABSTRACT - "The Design and Implementation of a
Learning Center for Career Oriented
Students"

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The majority of the students who attend Junior and Community Colleges are vocationally and technically oriented. The immediate need of these college students is the mastery of those tools necessary for "survival" within a content area. This program offers a supportive learning strategy for students by means of a Learning Center, a course dealing with study strategies for all freshmen and tutoring and faculty support. The Learning Center does not classify students in terms of good and poor readers. Instead it seeks to serve all students through the availability of appropriate course aids such as:

- a) transparencies explaining important concepts for classroom teaching;
- b) overlays illustrating step-by-step completion of course requirements;
- c) textbook highlighting of key words, concepts, formulas, and symbols;
- d) slides and accompanying tapes of teacher's lectures.

Learning strategy classes meet twice a week with a reading teacher who will apply reading and study techniques to the student's curriculum. An additional teacher-hour is spent in conference with the program coordinators, career faculty, and students. Tutorial assistance will be arranged according to student needs.

It has long been recognized that many services have been available to students. This program, under the direction of the program coordinator(s), utilizes the synergistic effect caused by the simultaneous input of faculty, reading teachers, consellers, and students. To facilitate

implementation, the program coordinators must be perceived as "helpers" to the faculty. Resistance to outside expertise and self-evaluation must be overcome through seminars, demonstration lessons and conferences so that the faculty will develop an awareness of the applicable reading and study skills to their curricula.

The objective of this program is to work from the student's area of highest motivation (his chosen vocation) to broaden his concept of the learning situation. The presentation of realistic learning skills utilizing current curriculum materials fosters learning which seeks to culminate in the kinds of preparation necessary for future placement and occupational advancement.

" THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
A LEARNING CENTER
FOR CAREER ORIENTED STUDENTS"

Lorraine Beitler
Irene Martin

I PHILOSOPHY

The majority of the students who attend New York City Community College are vocationally and technically oriented. Many have participated in previous remedial reading situations, and have felt the stigma of rigid adherence to grade level scores often based upon out-dated test items relying upon irrelevant vocabulary and comprehension selections. A remedial student's isolation and identification as a "problematic reader" often result in highly negative reactions to reading programs. Reading specialists, by continued use of generalized reading materials and exercises have ignored the inherent motivation a student brings to readings in his chosen field. The immediate need of the Junior College student is the mastery of those tools necessary for "survival" within a content area. This will best prepare the student for his immediate curricula needs, continued education, and career advancement.

II DESIGN

The aim of this program is to offer supportive learning methods and instructional aids for the career curriculum to be implemented through:

- a) a learning center
- b) a course dealing with learning strategies for all freshmen students
- c) tutoring and instructional support

The learning center does not classify students in terms of "good" and "poor" readers. Instead it seeks to serve all students through the availability of appropriate course aids such as:

- a) transparencies illustrating important concepts for classroom teaching
- b) overlays illustrating step-by-step completion of course requirements
- c) textbook highlighting of key words, concepts, formulas, and symbols
- d) video slides and accompanying tapes of teachers' lectures.

It is suggested that the course offered to all entering freshmen within a career division apply relevant learning strategy to the students' curricula. Students are programmed by department. Each class is scheduled to meet two hours per week. These classes are taught by a reading teacher who implements innovative materials and techniques. Additional hour(s) are arranged for tutorial assistance according to student needs. The curricula content inherent in this discipline provides a sound basis for assigning credit for this course of study.

Tutorial and instructional support are provided for the total population within each department. Student tutors must have an overall index of 2.0 and a B or better in the subjects they tutor. In the past, the main weakness of tutorial instruction has been the attempt to function without appropriate materials. Tutors have too often been exposed to tutor-tutee

situations for which they have not been prepared. This program provides sessions for tutors which include training in the use of newly developed materials, the nature of the tutor-tutee relationship and guidelines for the evaluation of progress.

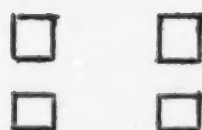
Within the structure of: a) individual tutoring sessions, b) seminar groups organized according to common tutee needs, and c) within-the-classroom assistance, tutors can maintain effective peer dialogue, utilize innovative materials developed in the resource center and aid in the development of appropriate learning supports. These materials are available in the learning center at all times for individual student use thereby providing the opportunity for learning without the pressure of a "50 minute unit of time."

- ☐ - contact hour
- conference hour
- tutorial & instructional assistance
(peer and faculty assistance)

A - Course Structure

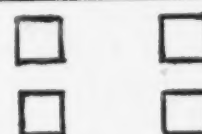
1. Reading Teacher:

*Career Program A

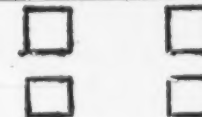


-- conference with:
a) reading admins.
b) students

Career Program B



Career Program C



B - Course Structure

2. Student:

☐ ☐ (hours to be arranged)

*NOTE: Career Program refers to courses of study such as Nursing, Marketing, Electrical Technology, Secretarial Science (legal and medical), etc. The Reading Teacher would teach classes, grouped by department, within a related division. For example, Depts. of Dental Hygiene, Dental Lab Technician, Medical Lab Technician and Nursing are part of the Division of Health Services.

IV FUNCTIONS OF LEARNING CENTER PERSONNEL

It has long been recognized that many services have been available to students. In the past each service has tended to operate as an independent unit. There have always been faculty members willing to spend extra time with students. Counselling programs have also played an important part in a student's life. Reading teachers and labs have been available and some form of tutoring has been offered. This program makes use of the synergistic effect of the simultaneous input of all these services.

The prime function of the program coordinators is to establish a climate where successful, interdisciplinary communication takes place among faculty, counselors, reading teachers, tutors and students.

To facilitate implementation, the program coordinators must be perceived as "helpers" to the faculty. Resistance to outside "expertise" and self-evaluation must be overcome to enable innovative materials, instructional aids and student learning supports to be developed. Through seminars, demonstration lessons, and conferences, the program coordinators confer with career faculty members to develop an awareness of the applicable reading and study skills to their curricula. This culminates in a multi-level approach to the subject through the use of readability procedures for maximum individualization of required readings, instructional aids for student reference in the learning center and appropriate audio-visual materials for classroom use.

Close cooperation with guidance counselors must be maintained in order to provide the means for early identification and follow up of student needs. The counselor builds upon his personal contacts with the students in each department and recommends those students who can qualify as tutors, refers students who are in need of additional support and follows through teacher referrals for guidance.

V SUMMARY

Instead of dealing with generalized material and contrived exercises, all of which place on the student the onus of responsibility for transfer of skills to specialized course curricula, the aim of this program is to function within the context of the student's chosen vocation - the area of highest motivation. Educators need to provide a program of career competency skills for all students within the setting of a proper emotional climate for realistic learning. This strategy seeks to foster learning which culminates in the necessary preparation for future placement and occupational advancement.

